



Plan Ahead for Stress-Free Shopping with Kids

- **Base the length of your shopping trip on the child's age.** The younger the child, the shorter the shopping trip should be.
- **Have a talk with your child before shopping.** Explain to the child expectations of his/her behavior before going into a store. Let him/her know what the consequences are if the expectations are not met. Clarify purpose of shopping trip, such as, "We are looking for grandma's present."
- **Make sure you and your child are up for shopping.** Ensure the child is well rested and fed. That goes for you as well. Do your shopping while everyone is fresh and energized.
- **Bring appropriate snacks and toys.** With a little planning, you can shop while your child keeps busy and feels secure. Bring along a nutritious snack, story or picture book, pad of paper and color markers, and familiar or age appropriate toys.
- **Reward your child's good behavior.** Agree on what will happen if your child behaves at the store. Keep it simple: a favorite snack, small toy or book; promise to read a book or play a game at home; stop by the park on your way home. Keep it simple and be sure to follow through.
- **Respect your child's limits.** Leave when your child begins to show signs of inattention, fatigue or misbehavior.
- **Follow through with consequences for bad behavior.** If you set rules with consequences before entering the store, be sure to follow through.